III. Draft Environmental Assessment

This environmental assessment section describes the environmental conditions at the Mammoth Bar OHV Area. It provides information to serve as a baseline from which to identify and evaluate environmental effects resulting from implementation of the proposed action and No Action alternative. The effects of the proposed action and No Action alternative are discussed in Section IV. B.

A. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

1. Air Quality

The Mammoth Bar OHV area is located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada at the edge of the Sacramento Valley Air Basin. This area experiences a mild climate with long hot summers and wet winters. The annual average maximum temperature in Auburn is 72 degrees Fahrenheit and the minimum temperature is 48 degrees Fahrenheit. The annual average precipitation in Auburn is just over 34 inches and typically falls between November and April (Space Imaging, 2002).

The nearest air quality data station is located in Auburn at the DeWitt Center. According to the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the only pollutant for which there was non-attainment in 2006 (through November) was Ozone. During this time, there were five Ozone exceedances for the State 1 hour standard (0.09 ppm); 17 State 8 hour Ozone exceedances (0.07 ppm), and five federal 8 hour Ozone exceedances (0.08 ppm) (CARB Website, December 2006). The federal exceedances were based on the National Ambient Air Quality standard for Ozone.

PM10 is monitored at the Roseville-N Sunrise Blvd site in Placer County and the Placerville-Gold Nugget Way site in El Dorado County. Over the past four years, Roseville-N Sunrise Blvd has had from zero to 6 days per year where the State 24-hour PM10 standard (50 ug/m3), was exceeded, presumably reflecting its more urban setting; Placerville-Gold Nugget Way has had no exceedances of the State 24-hour PM10 standard and the annual average there is around 15 ug/m3 (the annual standard is 30 ug/m3). .

For the most part, air quality is good as the site is remote and surrounded by undeveloped natural lands. During periods when the OHV area is open and in use, the site can be dusty due to the OHV activity. State Parks has a dust control system in force during open riding periods.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has established emission standards for Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV's). OHV's that are non-compliant for CARB emissions standards receive a red sticker registration from the California Department of Motor Vehicles (CDMV), which must be affixed to the vehicle. The red sticker identifies the vehicle as "non-complying" and limits its recreational use to those months of the year when CARB has determined that Ozone levels are low. Under these regulations, red sticker OHV's are prohibited from operating at Mammoth Bar June 1st through September 30th. This prohibition is strictly enforced by ASRA rangers and violators are subject to citation and fines.

2. Biological Resources

Mammoth Bar Wildlife Habitat Protection Plan (WHPP). In 2002 a WHPP was developed for the area by Wildlife Biologist Brian Williams in support of an application for state OHV grant funds. Although OHV grant funds are no longer used at Mammoth Bar, CDPR has continued to implement the WHPP.

The goal of the WHPP is to protect and maintain wildlife habitats, wildlife, and other sensitive natural resources at Mammoth Bar OHVA. Achieving this goal requires summarizing current knowledge, an inventory of existing conditions, monitoring to detect changes, and options to achieve goals through management. Thus, this plan is adaptive and intended to be responsive to changing ecological conditions or new information. Both the use of information and implementation are provided through four core components: soils monitoring, habitat monitoring, wildlife monitoring, and a resource protection plan. The following is a summary of these components in the WHPP.

WHPP Habitat Monitoring System. The general goal of the habitat monitoring system is to provide information for management to avoid impacts to sensitive plant and vegetation resources and to maintain healthy native plant communities. Habitat inventory and monitoring will assess changes in species composition and vegetation structure. A list of monitoring activities is included in the WHPP.

WHPP Wildlife Monitoring System. The general goal of the wildlife monitoring system is to provide information for guiding management to avoid impacts to sensitive wildlife and maintain of the diverse wildlife communities that are representative of the habitats in the area. Consequently, a primary objective of this WHPP is to conduct baseline inventories. A list of inventories completed and pending is included in the WHPP.

WHPP Resource Protection Plan. There are several management tools that are used or may be available to protect or restore valuable soil, plant, habitat, and wildlife resources. These include:

Protection: The primary management strategy is to protect valuable resources wherever they occur by controlling access and use patterns.

Species of Special Concern: The only identified species of special concern at Mammoth Bar is the Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle (VELB). Actions to protect the VELB are identified in the WHPP and include locating trails at least 20 feet from any elderberry shrubs, an annual survey of elderberry shrubs by a resource ecologist and work by the ecologist to ensure the survival of the current shrubs.

Law enforcement: The area is provided with law enforcement and protection services seven days a week by state park peace officers/rangers. The law enforcement program includes the following:

1. Perimeter patrols to keep OHV use in designated areas and during authorized riding days
2. Measures to keep riders on designated trails, including patrol and maintaining signs, barriers, and educational displays on bulletin boards
3. Inspection and enforcement for OHV registration, legal spark arrestors, and compliance with OHV noise limits
4. Enforcement of OHV safety violations (reckless driving, no helmet, etc.)
5. Enforcement of general criminal and traffic laws
6. OHV accident investigation and reporting
7. Emergency medical aid
8. Search & Rescue

Staff Education. A list and photographic guide of all potential rare, protected, and invasive plants and animals should be made available to all field personnel. This includes training in the identification of the elderberry shrub and the general ecology and control of invasive plants.

As part of WHPP preparation and implementation, a series of wildlife surveys have been conducted at the Mammoth Bar OHV area since 2000 (Jones and Stokes, 2000; Williams, 2002; and CDPR, 2002, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, and 2003a). Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix D provide lists of the special status species addressed by the surveys and the WHPP and includes a summary of the likelihood of presence in the project area.

Special Status Animals. Federally Listed. The Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle is the only federally listed species known, assumed, or suspected to occur in the Mammoth Bar OHV Area, and specifically within proximity to the MX Track repair site. Possible presence of the species is based on the presence of five elderberry shrubs at Mammoth Bar OHV Area (Jones & Stokes Associates, 2000); the elderberry is the host plant of the VELB. Although a few scattered elderberry shrubs occur at Mammoth Bar (refer to Figure III-1), no VELB or VELB sign (exit holes) have been observed on these shrubs (CDPR, 2002; CDPR, 2003). The nearest elderberry shrubs are 378 feet northeast of the MX track and would not be impacted by the track repair work (refer to Figure III-1).

The foothill yellow frog is a federal candidate species and is known from the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. However, specific surveys conducted in 2002 by Wildlife Biologist Brian Williams failed to find this frog in the OHV area.

Bald eagles may breed and forage in the American River canyons, but there is no suitable nesting habitat thought to exist on the Mammoth Bar site.

Sensitive Plant Communities. Three sensitive plant communities have been identified in the OHV Area. They include narrow-leaf willow series and mixed willow series, which are riparian vegetation types, and sedge series, which is a wetland vegetation type. The riparian vegetation types are associated with the Middle Fork of the American River and Murderer's Gulch and the several unnamed drainages. The wetland vegetation areas occur in areas having relatively flat slopes, within valleys, and are associated with some drainages (Space Imaging Solutions, 2002a).

Special Status Plants. A list of the special-status plant species with the potential to occur and descriptions of their habitat associations and bloom periods is provided in Table 2 of Appendix D. This table was prepared by Environmental Sciences Associates (2002) (Space Imaging Solutions, December 2002) using the California Natural Diversity Database and the California Native Plant Society Rare Plant Inventory. None of the special status plant species listed in Table 2 were found during surveys conducted in the Mammoth Bar OHV Area in 2002.

Avian Species. Table 1 in Appendix D contains a list of special status avian species that have the potential to occur at Mammoth Bar. Such species include osprey, white-tailed kite, bald eagle, Cooper's hawk, yellow warbler, and yellow breasted chat. These birds, as well as passerines and non-passerine land birds are protected under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA: 16 U.S.C., sec. 703, Supp. I, 1989) which prohibits killing, possessing, or trading in migratory birds, except in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior. This Act encompasses whole birds, parts of birds, and bird nests and eggs. In addition California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5, 3511, and 3513 prohibit taking, possessing, or needlessly destroying nests and eggs of any birds (3503); taking, possessing, or destroying any birds-of-prey or taking, possessing, or destroying the nest or eggs of any such bird (3503.5); taking or possessing any state designated fully protected birds or parts thereof (3511); and taking or possessing any migratory non-game bird as designated in the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (3513). Fully protected birds include the following species which have the potential to occur at Mammoth Bar: peregrine falcon, bald eagle, golden eagle, and white-tailed kite.

Fisheries. The Middle Fork American River supports coldwater fish species year-round with the primary sport fish being the resident rainbow (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and the brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) (HDR/SWRI, 2006). Fish studies conducted by the USFWS in 1989 on the Middle Fork American River from the Ralston Afterbay to the downstream confluence with the North Fork American River documented the presence of other fish including the hitch (*Lavinia exilicauda*), Sacramento sucker (*Catostomus occidentalis*), Sacramento pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus grandis*), and the riffle sculpin (*Cottus gulosus*) (HDR/SWRI, 2006). No special status fish species are reported to occur in the Middle Fork American River (HDR/SWRI, 2006).

Figure III-1 Location of Nearest Elderberry Shrub at Mammoth Bar Project Site

3. Cultural Resources

A survey of the project site for cultural resources was conducted by CDPR Archaeologist Phil Hines for the maintenance of the MX track in 2002. The closest historic resource to the project area is a rock retaining wall located across and uphill of the Mammoth Bar OHV Park's main access road (Space Imaging Solutions, 2002a). Reclamation determined in 2006 that this structure, debris from a historic residence, was not eligible for inclusion in the National Register (USBR, 2006). There were no cultural resources found within the MX track footprint where the repair work would be conducted (refer to Figure II-2 in this document). Note that Figure II-2 includes the area of potential effect for cultural resources. Reclamation completed a Section 106 process for CDPR's proposed motocross track dust control system at the Mammoth Bar OHV area. Reclamation concluded that the motocross track dust control project would not affect properties listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places (USBR, 2006a).

4. Geology and Soils

Space Imaging Solutions prepared a report on the geologic and hydrologic conditions at the Mammoth Bar OHV Areas (Space Imaging Solutions, 2005). The following excerpt is from that report. **"**The Bear Mountain Fault Zone (central part of the Foothills fault system) is located approximately 3.5 miles to the southwest of the OHV area and includes the Melones Fault Zone, as well as numerous smaller, but related faults. According to the Fault Activity Map for California, these faults have not exhibited evidence of Quaternary displacement activity within the last 1.6 million years (Jennings, 1994)."

The Space Imaging Solutions report also indicates "active landslide features located within the OHV area are primarily associated with horizontal trail cuts into the native slope material, primarily along the Riverbar Trail" (Space Imaging Solutions, 2005). The project site is far enough away from the steep slopes of the Riverbar Trail that it would not be subject to landslides.

A soils study of the OHV area was prepared by Space Imaging Solutions (Space Imaging, 2005). According to the soils study, soils exhibiting characteristics similar to those of the Auburn and Sobrante soil series dominate the OHV area. Auburn soils consist of shallow to moderately deep, well drained soils formed in vertically tilted material weathered from metamorphic rock, amphibolite shist. Boomer soils occur in the eastern portions of the OHV area along ridge tops and on east and north-facing slopes in narrow gulches. Boomer soils are differentiated in the field by the presence of a thick duff layer, dense tree canopy and their increased depth. At the base of the OHV area are several bar units that occur in and along the channels of the Middle Fork. This material consists of a highly stratified stony and bouldery sand that is typically barren except for isolated areas containing riparian vegetation. The MX Track footprint contains altered soils and fill that has been placed over river gravel (Space Imaging Solutions, 2005). This material was brought in to create the track in the late 1990s (Space Imaging Solutions, 2002a).

A major component of the Mammoth Bar Wildlife Habitat Protection Program is soil conservation and monitoring. The erosive soils within Mammoth Bar closely link habitat protection to soil conservation and erosion control. A document titled the "Soil Conservation Guidelines and Standards for Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Management" was approved in 1991. The standards and procedures of this document are and will continue to be implemented at Mammoth Bar OHVA. As required in the OHV Soil Conservation Guidelines, soil loss monitoring is conducted each year and an annual report is prepared by the resource ecologist on the condition of the trails. OHV riding is restricted to established and designated trails and tracks to reduce disturbance to natural resources. Trails and tracks are closed temporarily during wet weather to prevent damage and reduce soil erosion.

5. Hazardous Materials

The Geologic and Hydraulic Report at the Mammoth Bar OHV Areas prepared by Space Imaging Solutions (2005) also contained a toxic substances inventory. The report concluded, "soil sampling … revealed little in the way of localized surface contamination of petroleum – based products (e.g., motor oil and fuel) within the areas most likely to contain isolated petroleum spills or discarded engine parts. These areas specifically included the gravel parking lot, staging areas within the OHV circuit, and rider rendezvous points scattered at various locations."

No hazardous materials or areas identified on the Department of Toxic Substance Control's (DTSC) Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List (California DTSC, Website, July 2006) are located within the Mammoth Bar OHV area. OHV trail and track users refuel their OHV vehicles in the parking area. This is the common practice in state and federal OHV areas in California. For minor fuel spills, CDPR staff has ready access to fuel clean up kits at Mammoth Bar. If more significant or extensive fuel or hazardous material spills were to occur, state park staff would immediately notify the appropriate state agencies (i.e. the California Dept. of Forestry & Fire Protection and the Department of Fish and Game - Office of Spill Prevention and Response) and the Placer County Office of Emergency Services Hazardous Materials Response Team for response and cleanup.

6. Hydrology and Water Quality

The footprint of the pre-flood MX track varied between 50 to 100 feet from the normal summer water level of the Middle Fork of the American River. Although the repaired track footprint is outside of the ordinary high water mark (OHW) of the Middle Fork American River, it is within the 100 year flood zone and is subject to flooding during winter storms that exceed a 10 year expected event (California Geologic Survey, 2006).

There is a dam upstream of the site that could cause substantial flooding in the area if the dam were to fail. Note that the upstream Oxbow Dam did fail in December 1964 resulting in a peak flow of 253,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) inundating large areas of Mammoth Bar. The dam is operated by the Placer County Water Agency (PCWA). Typical key peak flow events are more in the order of 50,000-70,000 cfs along the section of the Middle Fork American River that passes Mammoth Bar (Space Imaging Solutions, 2002a). The storm event that occurred in December 2005 and which damaged the MX Track was roughly 40,000 cfs (California Geologic Survey, 2006).

The material used to build the track consists of fill material that was exported to the site as well as some native river wash material. During a storm event, water runoff from the site would naturally filtrate through the river wash to the river or it may flow directly into the river depending on the intensity of the storm.

7. Land Use

The project is located within lands of the ASRA. The OHV uses that occur at Mammoth Bar are allowable uses in a SRA.

The MX track has been operating under the terms of a Settlement Agreement between the Sierra Club, Friends of the River and the Oakland-based Environmental Law Foundation (plaintiffs) against CDPR over its operation of the Mammoth Bar OHV Area near Auburn. As a part of the Agreement, an interim management plan period was initiated that allows the OHV track and trail facility to continue to operate Sundays, Mondays, and Thursdays, and for the period October 1 through March 31, also on Fridays. The interim management plan would stay in effect until a long-term management study of ASRA is completed. CDPR is in the process of preparing a GP/IRMP for both the Mammoth Bar OHV facility and the larger ASRA. A Task Force has been set up to help direct the study. Refer to Chapter I. C. Project Background for

more information on the Settlement Agreement and Appendix E which provides a copy of the lawsuit settlement and a task matrix describing the current status of lawsuit related tasks

8. Scenic Resources

Mammoth Bar is an area of rugged scenic beauty with complex topographic forms and a diversity of natural vegetation. Significant wildlife populations and the presence of abundant water in the landscape contribute to the scenic resources of the area. The Middle Fork of the American River, alternating patterns of tumbling rapids and deep, slow moving pools, carve through the v-shaped river canyon. The river canyon is steep and thickly wooded from river level to the ridgeline, which looms over a thousand feet above the canyon floor. Many tributary streams run into the river, sometimes at a very steep gradient, creating small cascades and waterfalls. The river banks alternate between gravel bars, granite benches, and large granite boulders. The banks are vegetated with typical riparian species, including willows, white alders, Fremont cottonwood, sycamore, and Oregon ash. The consistency of the hillside vegetation gives a very uniform visual texture to the canyon walls, which is broken up in autumn by the changing colors of the leaves. Mammoth Bar possesses scenic resources ideally suited for a wide range of recreational activities.

U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, Mid-Pacific Region, completed the "American River Water Resources Investigation Technical Team's Inventory and Recommendation for Wild and Scenic River Eligibility and Preliminary Classification". A February 11, 1993 Reclamation letter transmitted the completed Report to the Interagency Study Team stating that "On January 7, 1993 Regional Director, Roger Patterson, concurred in the report's recommendation and determined that three segments on the North and Middle Forks of the American River are 'Eligible' for Wild and Scenic designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA) of 1968". One of the three River segments determined to be eligible for Wild and Scenic designation under WSRA included in this Study was the Middle Fork, from Oxbow Dam to the confluence with the North Fork American River. The length of this segment is approximately 23 miles and includes Mammoth Bar.

The Interagency Study Team included California Department of Parks and Recreation, Bureau of Reclamation, United States Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Only one Outstanding Remarkable Value (ORV) is required to qualify a river segment as being eligible for Wild and Scenic designation. The Middle Fork segment qualified for six out of the seven criteria used to assess ORV designations. These criteria were Recreation, Scenic, Geologic, Wildlife, Fish, Ecological and other values, and Cultural. The Middle Fork segment did not possess any ORV for the Geologic category.

Some of the specific ORVs included the Western States Trail Tevis Cup Ride and white water rafting for Recreation; water forms and deep and steep canyon walls and rugged terrain for Scenic; threatened Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle, Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog, and wildlife habitat being of exceptional high quality and diversity for Wildlife; Rainbow Trout habitat for Fish; Lindsey's Skipper Butterfly and ecosystem diversity for Ecological; and Horseshoe Bar tunnels for Cultural. A suitability study remains to be completed which will determine if the eligible river segments are suitable for designation to the National Wild and Scenic River System. "In the meantime, all the outstanding remarkable values identified within these segments and within ¼ mile of the river will be protected as required under WSRA." (Reclamation, 1993)

9. Noise

The noise environment at Mammoth Bar varies depending on whether the OHV area is opened or closed. During open periods the area is characterized by loud bursts of motorcycle noises with the intensity depending on the number of users. Noise at the site when the track is closed is restricted to the natural noise of the river, wind, and any vehicles arriving or departing

the site. Occasionally during non-OHV operating hours, State Parks staff may conduct maintenance on the track and trail facilities. Such activities temporarily increase noise levels depending on the nature of the work and if heavy equipment is required or not.

10. Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice, requires that review of proposed federal actions analyze any disproportionately high and adverse environmental or human health impacts on minority and low-income communities. No disproportionately high or adverse environmental or human health effects on minority or low-income communities have been identified for ASRA or the Mammoth Bar OHV Area, and none would occur as a result of the MX Track Replacement Project.

11. Transportation and Traffic

Access to the site is from Old Foresthill Road. The entrance to the Mammoth Bar OHV Area is located on Old Foresthill Road. The easiest access is from Foresthill Road off of Interstate 80 north of Auburn via the Foresthill exit. The entrance road travels down a steep hillside down to the river bar which gives the areas its name. Parking and staging facilities are located at the bottom of the hill just past the entrance station. Access to the motocross track by the OHVs is from the staging area. Prior to the December 2005 storm, a service road for the motocross track was situated on the riverside of the track. The service road was damaged by the 2005/2006 storm events.

12. Recreation

The project is located within the Mammoth Bar OHV Area of the ASRA and provides recreational opportunities for both OHV enthusiasts and river rafters, among others.

The recreational facilities at Mammoth Bar include two graded parking areas, six shade-ramadas, three picnic & BBQ areas, a motocross track (currently closed due to flood damage), a small motorcycle (90cc or less) motocross track, a PITS trials motorcycle practice area, 13 miles of OHV trails (also used by downhill mountain bikers and hikers), an ATV training area (also used as an emergency helicopter landing zone), a 50-foot long loading/unloading dock, a whitewater boating take-out area and six chemical toilets.

Recreational use includes OHV riding on the motocross tracks, OHV trail riding, OHV trials riding, mountain biking, picnicking, river boating, hiking, swimming, sunbathing and other river related uses.

Estimated day-use figures in 2005 were 1) 15,000 on MX tracks (prior to track damage); 2) 5,000 on OHV Trail; and 3) 5,000 for all other recreational use, for a total of 25,000 day-users for the year.

13. Indian Trust Assets

Indian Trust Assets (ITAs) are legal interests in property held in trust for Indian tribes or individuals by the United States. It is Reclamation's policy to protect ITAs from adverse impacts resulting from its programs and activities. According to Frank Perniciaro, Native American Affairs Program Manager for Reclamation, there are no Indian trust assets in ASRA. The nearest Indian trust assets are located at the Old Auburn Rancheria, about 5 ½ miles southwest of Mammoth Bar, in NW1/4, SE1/4 Section 21, T12N, R8E.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

1. SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This section analyzes the environmental consequences of implementing the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives. The following table summarizes the overall environmental impacts for each element described in the affected environment.

Table 1. Summary of Environmental Consequences

ELEMENT	NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE	PROPOSED ACTION
Air Quality	P	M
Biological Resources	P	M
Cultural Resources	L	L
Geology and Soils	P	M
Hazardous Materials	P	M
Hydrology and Water Quality	P	M
Land Use	S	M
Visual Resources	P	L
Noise	P	L
Environmental Justice	L	L
Transportation and Traffic	L	L
Recreation	S	P
Indian Trust Assets	L	L
Cumulative Impacts	S	L

P Positive Environmental Effect
L Less than Significant Environmental Effect
M Mitigated to less than Significant Effect
S Significant Adverse Environmental Effect

The Land Use, Recreation, and Cumulative Impacts elements each simultaneously have positive and significant adverse environmental effects depending on the perspective of different user/special interest groups. For these elements, the overall environmental effect listed is the adverse environmental effect (S) rather than the positive environmental effect (P). The No Action alternative presumes a long-term decision to return the area to its natural condition. The Proposed Action is an interim measure until long-term planning decisions for Mammoth Bar are realized.

To fully understand the impact conclusions discussed below, it is important to remember that the scope of the Proposed Action is limited to the repair and interim use of the MX track. Planning for the long-term use of the entire OHV area, to include the MX track, will be fully considered in the upcoming IRMP/GP EIS/EIR for ASRA.

2. PROPOSED ACTION

a. Air Quality

The proposed action involves only minor grading by heavy equipment to repair the track so that the public can safely use it. The site is on the lower terrace gravel along the river and does not contain any naturally occurring asbestos, ultramafic rock, or serpentine. The total affected area is roughly 3.5 acres. The track repair would take about 7-10 days to complete and would employ a crew of 2-4 persons using a front loader, a small bulldozer, and water truck for dust control. The work largely rebuilds the existing track and will not entail major earthmoving. The realigned 800-foot section of service road would be rebuilt by grading existing materials with no imported earth.

Localized, short term air quality degradation could result from diesel exhaust from the heavy equipment used during minor grading (front loader, small dozer, water truck) and from dust being generated while grading is taking place. The operation of the equipment would occur on weekdays when the area has the fewest visitors. A screening level emissions factor commonly applied in environmental documents for daily particulate emissions for a construction site with minimal earthmoving and routine watering for dust control is 10.1 pounds PM10 per acre per day (derived from CEQA Air Quality Guidelines, Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, June 2004, Table 5-2 Construction Activity with Potentially Significant Impacts). When this factor is applied to the 3.5 acre work site for the proposed action, peak construction PM10 emissions would be approximately 35 pounds per acre per day.

Most local air quality management or air pollution control districts in California have established a significance threshold for use in state environmental compliance review (CEQA). Typical thresholds are: 80 lbs/day [Feather River Air Quality Management District (AQMD) http://www.fraqmd.org/CEQA_Thresholds.htm] Bay Area AQMD (CEQA GUIDELINES Assessing the Air Quality Impacts of Projects and Plans, December, 1999; Monterey Bay UAPCD, CEQA GUIDELINES, June 2004). The corresponding agencies at Placer County, El Dorado County, and Sacramento Metropolitan AQMD do not set an emissions threshold for PM10.

The air quality impacts of the repair project are considered less than significant due to the remoteness of the site, small scale of the operation, and short duration (7 -10 days) of the project. The estimated 35 lbs/day project emissions are below the customary 80 lb/day threshold of significance for PM10. Air quality is degraded at the site during open riding days due to vehicle exhaust and dust generation, however, the dust control systems and CARB prohibitions against use of non-complying vehicles on high Ozone days make the ongoing air quality impacts less than significant.

Measure Measures:

Measure AIR-1. Construction. The principal mitigation for PM10 emissions is to limit site activity to no more than 3.5 acres in any one day and to apply sufficient water to hold down dust. The following list of measures and percent effectiveness applies to this project. Other measures such as installed sprinkler systems and road paving are not warranted for this short term activity.

Source	Mitigation Measure	Effectiveness
Soil Piles	Enclose, cover or water twice daily all soil piles	16%
Exposed Surface/Grading	Water exposed soil with adequate frequency for continued moist soil	75%
Truck Hauling	Water all haul roads twice	3%

	daily	
Truck Hauling On-site	Maintain at least two feet of freeboard	1%
Truck Hauling Off-site	Load Cover load of all haul/dump trucks securely	2%

Source: TRA adapted from SCAQMD, Weighted for percentage contribution of PM10 emissions

Measure AIR-2. Operation: All dust control measures and CARB restrictions now applied at Mammoth Bar will continue to apply to recreational use of the repaired track. No additional measures are needed.

Effectiveness: The measures listed above would reduce potentially significant air quality impacts to less than significant levels.
Implementation: A CDPR Gold Fields District staff member would monitor the site.
Timing: Throughout the construction and use phase, when applicable.
Monitoring: CDPR, Gold Fields District.

b. Biological Resources

Special Status Animals. Federally Listed. There are no affects on federally listed animals from the proposed action as none of the species that have the potential to occur at the site (VELB, and Bald Eagle) have been observed during specific surveys for the species. In addition, the federal candidate yellow-legged frog has not been observed during surveys of the site.

Special Concern Species. According to Wildlife Biologist Brian Williams (2002), there are no impacts from OHV use on any of the special-status species restricted to riverside or riparian habitats within the Mammoth Bar OHV Area. Williams attributes this to the fact that OHV use and associated users do not heavily impact the shoreline of Mammoth Bar and also the species have become accustomed to the recreational uses within the area.

The only special status species known to occur in close proximity to the MX track are the yellow warbler and the yellow-breasted chat. Both of these species were found by Williams (2002) in riparian habitat immediately adjacent to the track. Williams felt that it is possible that the predictability made possible by the defined OHV track as well as day- and time-use restrictions have reduced the impact of OHV use on these species.

Special-Status Plants. None of the special-status plant species listed in Appendix D, Table 2, were found during surveys of the site therefore, there would be no affect on special-status plants.

Avian Species. Although there are no large trees in close proximity to the MX track which are suitable as nesting substrate for the larger raptors (bald eagle, Cooper's hawk, osprey, white tailed kite), other birds my nest in the willows that are in and adjacent to the MX track area. In order to assure that nesting birds are not disturbed by the repair work CDPR should conduct a survey of the site at least five days prior to beginning the repair work (refer to Measure BIO-7 below).

Riparian Habitat and Wetlands. The MX Track is located within the flood plain of the Middle Fork of the American River, however, the track is not located within an area that contains wetlands and is located above the ordinary high water (OHW) mark of the river. Therefore, the project is not within Corps jurisdiction.

Since the MX Track repair work would be done within the existing footprint of the MX Track, there would be no impacts on the riparian habitat that occurs along the flood plain of the Middle Fork of the American River. In addition, the portion of the repaired track that is closest to

the river would be realigned so that it is further from the river (80 to 100 feet instead of 50 feet from the OHW line).

CDPR has obtained a streambed alteration agreement with CDFG for the track repair work (CDFG, 2006). The conditions of the agreement that pertain to minimizing the impacts of biological resources, including the riverine and riparian habitats, and are included as mitigation measures below.

Mitigation Measures:

Measure BIO-1: The time period for completing the work within the stream zone of the Middle Fork American River shall be restricted to periods of low stream flow and dry weather. Construction activities shall be timed with awareness of precipitation forecasts and likely increases in stream flow. Construction activities shall cease until all reasonable erosion control measures have been implemented prior to all storm events. No work will occur during wet weather. Wet weather is defined as when there has been ¼ inch of rain in a 24-hour period. In addition, no work will occur during a dry out period of 24 hours after the above referenced wet weather. Revegetation, restoration and erosion control work is not confined to this time period.

Measure BIO-2: Precautions to minimize turbidity and siltation of the Middle Fork American River shall be taken into account during project planning and implementation. This may require the placement of silt fencing, coir logs, straw bale dikes, or other siltation barriers so that silt and/or other deleterious materials are not allowed to pass to downstream reaches. Passage of sediment beyond the sediment barriers is prohibited. If any sediment barrier fails to retain sediment, corrective measures shall be taken. The sediment barriers shall be maintained in good operating condition throughout the construction period and the following rainy season. Maintenance includes, but is not limited to, removal of accumulated silt and/or replacement of damaged silt fencing, coir logs, coir rolls, and/or straw bale dikes. CDPR is responsible for the removal of non-biodegradable silt barriers (such as plastic silt fencing) after the disturbed areas have been stabilized with erosion control vegetation after the first growing season. Upon CDFG determination that turbidity/siltation levels resulting from project related activities constitute a threat to aquatic life, activities associated with the turbidity/siltation, shall be halted until effective CDFG approved devices are installed, or abatement procedures are initiated.

Measure BIO-3: Disturbance or removal of vegetation shall not exceed the minimum necessary to complete operations. No native trees with a trunk diameter at breast height (DBH) in excess of four (4) inches shall be removed or damaged without prior consultation and approval of a CDFG representative. Using hand tools (clippers, chain saw, etc.), trees may be trimmed to the extent necessary to gain access to the work sites. All cleared material and vegetation shall be removed from the riparian/stream zone and utilized on site (fill or mulch for erosion and sedimentation control) or transported off-site for disposal in accordance with local ordinances.

Measure BIO-4: Raw cement/concrete or washings thereof, asphalt, paint or other coating material, oil or other petroleum products, or any other substances which could be hazardous to aquatic life, resulting from project related activities, shall be prevented from contaminating the soil and/or entering the waters of the state. Any of these materials, placed within or where they may enter a stream or lake, by CDPR or any party working under contract, or with permission of the CDPR, shall be removed immediately. CDFG shall be notified immediately by the CDPR of any spills and shall be consulted regarding clean-up procedures.

Measure BIO-5: During construction, the contractor shall not dump any litter or construction debris within the stream zone. All construction debris and associated materials shall be removed from the work area upon completion of the project.

Measure BIO-6: All exposed/disturbed areas and access points within the stream zone left barren of vegetation as a result of the construction activities shall be restored using native

grass seeds, native grass plugs and/or a mix of quick growing sterile non-native grass with native grass seeds. The seeding and planting shall be approved by the CDPR Resource Ecologist.

Measure BIO-7: A qualified biologist shall conduct a survey for nesting raptors and other birds within five days prior to the start of construction activities. If active nests are not present, construction activities can take place as scheduled. If more than 5 days elapse between the initial nest search and the beginning of construction activities, another nest survey shall be conducted. If any active nests are detected, a qualified biologist shall determine the appropriate buffer to be established around the nest. CDFG generally accepts a 50-foot radius buffer around passerine and non-passerine land bird nests, and up to a 250-foot radius for raptors, however the biologist shall have flexibility to reduce or expand the buffer depending on the specific circumstances. Unless prior CDFG approval is obtained, no trees that contain active nests of birds that are protected under CDFG Codes 3503, 3503.5, 3511, and 3513 and the Migratory Bird Act shall be disturbed until all eggs have hatched and young birds have fledged.

Measure BIO-8: The Proposed Action will comply with program objectives in the CDPR Mammoth Bar Off-Highway Vehicle Area Wildlife Habitat Protection Plan (WHPP) (CDPR, Williams, 2002). The goal of the WHPP is to protect and maintain wildlife habitats, wildlife, and other sensitive natural resources at Mammoth Bar OHV area.

Effectiveness: The measures listed above would reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant levels.
Implementation: A CDPR Gold Fields District Resource Ecologist would monitor the site.
Timing: Throughout the construction and use phase, when applicable.
Monitoring: CDPR, Gold Fields District.

c. Cultural Resources

Since the MX track repair project is contained within the same area as the MX track dust control project and Reclamation concluded that this project would not affect properties listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places (USBR, 2006a), it is expected that the repair project will not adversely affect sites listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places (USBR, 2006; USBR 2006a; CDPR, 2002c). Reclamation will comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act prior to any ground disturbance associated with the proposed action.

d. Geology and Soils

During the storms of December 2005/January 2006 some of the altered soil and fill were washed away by flood waters. Only the most compacted of the fill remained after the flood waters receded. The proposed track repair project would use only existing material to make the track safe for use. Soil erosion could occur during the repair work. The impacts, however, can be mitigated through the use of specific measures already identified to reduce impacts on riparian habitat and on erodable soils. These measures restrict the timing of construction work during dry periods, require the use of sediment barriers, and restrict vegetation removal to only that needed to carryout the repairs. No additional mitigation would be necessary.

There are no geotechnical effects related to operation of the track once it has been repaired and reopened due to the absence of significant geologic features (landslides, fault zones) in or near the track footprint. However, soil erosion could occur from the ongoing use of the track once it has been repaired and reopened. Design of the repaired track includes a drainage swale that would hold soil erosion during rain events. Regular maintenance of the track conducted under a Stream Alteration Agreement with CDFG (refer to Appendix A) would minimize loose soils through watering and compaction and other erosion control measures.

Finally, the ongoing use of the MX track requires compliance with the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division's soil conservation program and soil loss guidelines.

Mitigation Measure:

Measure GEO-1: The time period for completing the work within the stream zone of the Middle Fork American River shall be restricted to periods of low stream flow and dry weather. Construction activities shall be timed with awareness of precipitation forecasts and likely increases in stream flow. Construction activities shall cease until all reasonable erosion control measures have been implemented prior to all storm events. No work will occur during wet weather. Wet weather is defined as when there has been ¼ inch of rain in a 24-hour period. In addition, no work will occur during a dry out period of 24 hours after the above referenced wet weather. Revegetation, restoration and erosion control work is not confined to this time period.

Measure GEO-2: Precautions to minimize turbidity and siltation of the Middle Fork American River shall be taken into account during project planning and implementation. This may require the placement of silt fencing, coir logs, straw bale dikes, or other siltation barriers so that silt and/or other deleterious materials are not allowed to pass to downstream reaches. Passage of sediment beyond the sediment barriers is prohibited. If any sediment barrier fails to retain sediment, corrective measures shall be taken. The sediment barriers shall be maintained in good operating condition throughout the construction period and the following rainy season. Maintenance includes, but is not limited to, removal of accumulated silt and/or replacement of damaged silt fencing, coir logs, coir rolls, and/or straw bale dikes. CDPR is responsible for the removal of non-biodegradable silt barriers (such as plastic silt fencing) after the disturbed areas have been stabilized with erosion control vegetation (usually after the first growing season). Upon CDFG determination that turbidity/siltation levels resulting from project related activities constitute a threat to aquatic life, activities associated with the turbidity/siltation, shall be halted until effective CDFG approved devices are installed, or abatement procedures are initiated.

Measure GEO-3: Disturbance or removal of vegetation shall not exceed the minimum necessary to complete operations. No native trees with a truck diameter at breast height (DBH) in excess of four (4) inches shall be removed or damaged without prior consultation and approval of a CDFG representative. Using hand tools (clippers, chain saw, etc.) trees may be trimmed to the extent necessary to gain access to the work sites. All cleared material and vegetation shall be removed from the riparian/stream zone and utilized on site (fill or mulch for erosion and sedimentation control) or transported off-site for disposal in accordance with local ordinances.

Measure GEO-4: All exposed/disturbed areas and access points within the stream zone left barren of vegetation as a result of the construction activities shall be restored using native grass seeds, native grass plugs and/or a mix of quick growing sterile non-native grass with native grass seeds. The seeding and planting shall be approved by the CDPR Resource Ecologist.

Effectiveness: The measures listed above would reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant levels.
Implementation: CDPR, Gold Fields District. In addition, ongoing soil monitoring is conducted by Goldfields District staff throughout the OHV area as part of the WHPP.
Timing: Throughout the construction and use phase, when applicable.
Monitoring: CDPR, Gold Fields District.

e. Hazardous Materials

There is potential for the heavy equipment used to carry out the track repair work to spill petroleum products during operation and refueling. In addition, refueling of motorcycles using the track could result in gasoline and oils spills at the site. In order to prevent contamination of

on site soils the following mitigation measure would be implemented for the construction phase and use phase:

Mitigation Measure:

Measure HAZ-1: Vehicle operation and refueling during construction and use of the track shall include the following:

- A spill response plan will be developed for the construction and use of the OHV track before construction begins.
- A spill response kit will be kept on-site during construction and operation of the OHV track.
- Onsite vehicle and equipment fueling will only be used where it is impractical to send vehicles and equipment offsite for fueling.
- A dedicated fueling area will be established in the Mammoth Bar OHV Area parking lot, protected from storm water run-on and runoff, and located at least 50 ft away from downstream drainage facilities and watercourses. Fueling will be performed on a level-grade area.
- Drip pans or absorbent pads will be used during vehicle and equipment fueling.
- Fueling operations will not be left unattended.

Effectiveness: The measure would reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant levels.
Implementation: CDPR, Gold Fields District.
Timing: Throughout the construction and use phase, when applicable.
Monitoring: CDPR, Gold Fields District.

f. Hydrology and Water Quality

The installation portion of the proposed project has the potential to degrade water quality due to the close proximity of the project site to the Middle Fork American River, and the grading needed to repair the track would create loose soil conditions. The effects, however, can be mitigated through the use of specific measures already identified to reduce impacts on riparian habitat and on erodible soils (refer to Mitigation Measures Bio 1 to Bio 6). These measures restrict the timing of construction work during dry periods, require the use of sediment barriers, and restrict vegetation removal to only that needed to carryout the repairs. No additional mitigation would be necessary.

As stated in the Geology and Soils section above, soil erosion could also occur from the ongoing use of the track once it has been repaired and reopened. Design of the repaired track includes a drainage swale that would hold soil erosion during rain events. Regular maintenance of the track conducted under a Stream Alteration Agreement with CDFG (refer to Appendix A) would minimize loose soils through watering and compaction and other erosion control measures. Finally, the ongoing use of the MX track requires compliance with the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division's soil conservation program and soil loss guidelines.

Although the site is subject to periodic flooding, the likelihood that people or structures would be harmed as a result of the project operation is extremely low. First, no structures are proposed and second, users of the recreation site can escape rising flood waters either on their own or through evacuation orders issued by CDPR. In the unlikely event of a dam failure upstream, the PCWA in cooperation with CDPR would evacuate areas downstream though the use of emergency vehicles and/or aircraft (PCWA, 2005).

g. Land Use

The project involves repairing an existing MX track that was damaged during storms of December 2005/January 2006. The track repairs would actually reduce the overall footprint of the MX track and would move the track away from the river in certain areas (refer back to the description of the proposed action). Environmental effects on land use from the Proposed Action are mitigated to less than significant given the all the mitigation measures listed in this section.

The settlement agreement specifically states no expansion of the OHV facility would proceed during the interim management period. The current project is not considered an expansion of the existing use, as it would reinstate a use that is included under the 1992 GP/IRMP. The GP/IRMP is currently being updated and will include an EIS/EIR which will address long-term recreation use of Mammoth Bar.

h. Scenic Resources

Environmental effects on scenic resources for the proposed action are less than significant given that after construction, the repaired MX Track will be slightly reduced in size. Long-term effects from recreation uses on visual resources at Mammoth Bar will be analyzed in the updated GP/IRMP.

i. Noise

The project may increase noise levels temporarily during project construction as a result of the need to conduct minor grading to repair the track. Since the area is already subject to OHV noise, the noise of the work equipment would not significantly change the noise environment in the area. If the repair were conducted during hours that the OHV area is closed, the ambient noise levels would be increased in areas near the track. However, the elevated noise levels would be short-term, lasting only 7 to 10 days, and recreational users can choose to limit their activities during construction.

j. Environmental Justice

No disproportionately high or adverse environmental or human health affects on minority or low-income communities have been identified for the proposed action at the Mammoth Bar OHV Area.

k. Transportation and Traffic

The project does not propose any changes or alterations to the existing highway and road networks in the Mammoth Bar OHV Area. Emergency access to project facilities would be via the existing network of paved and unpaved roads and OHV trails, thus no impacts on emergency access routes would be affected by the project. No existing parking areas would be affected by either the construction of operation of the proposed project. The existing service road to the motocross track would be repaired and portions realigned. The road would have the same utility as the previous service road which is for the maintenance of the track. The service road is for use by Park personnel only.

l. Recreation

The repair of the MX track would reinstate an existing recreational use that is operating under the 1992 ASRA GP/IRMP. In the past, the MX track generated 15,000 user days per year at Mammoth Bar. Repairing and reopening the track would benefit the OHV community by providing a high quality motocross experience in an area that has high OHV demand.

The repaired track is not considered an expansion of the current use of the OHV area and is not expected to increase the pre-storm use of the OHV area. Long-term OHV use in ASRA will be assessed in the GP/IRMP currently under revision by CDPR and Reclamation.

m. Indian Trust Assets

There are no Indian trust assets in ASRA and therefore no impact to ITA from the proposed action. The nearest ITAs are located at the Old Auburn Rancheria, about 5 ½ miles southwest of Mammoth Bar, in NW1/4, SE1/4 Section 21, T12N, R8E.

n. Cumulative Impacts

There would be no significant cumulative impacts from the proposed action since this project does not exceed the original MX track footprint. The MX track would be a partial reconstruction of the original track.

3. NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

a. Air Quality

Implementation of the No Action alternative would have short-term effects on air quality similar to the proposed action. The decommissioning work would also involve grading to remove the existing track material and to re-contour the site to its natural topography. The short-term adverse effects on air quality during decommissioning of the track will be mitigated to less than significant with dust abatement and erosion and sedimentation control measures listed under air quality and biological resources respectively in the proposed action.

Since the No Action alternative would result in the decommissioning of the motocross track, there would be less dust generated at the site from the ongoing use of the motocross track. The removal of a high dust generating use would result in a positive long-term effect on the air quality environment at Mammoth Bar.

b. Biological Resources

Implementation of the No Action alternative would not impact listed or special status species. None are in close proximity to the MX track and the decommissioning work would be conducted in the existing MX track footprint. The impacts of the decommissioning work on the riparian habitat would be similar to the project alternative as grading and soil movement would still take place under the No Action alternative. Some or all of the measures described for the proposed action would apply under the No Action alternative. The elimination of the MX track at Mammoth Bar would likely have a positive long-term effect on wildlife species which may otherwise avoid the site due to the ongoing noise and high human activity related to the track use.

c. Cultural Resources

Implementation of the No Action alternative would not impact cultural resources as no cultural resources are found in close proximity to the MX track and the decommissioning work would be conducted in the existing MX track footprint.

d. Geology and Soils

During track decommissioning, implementation of the No Action alternative would have similar impacts as the proposed action. The decommissioning work would involve grading to remove the existing track material and to re-contour the site to its natural topography. All of the mitigation measures described for the proposed action would apply for the decommissioning phase of the No Action alternative. Long-term impacts of eliminating the track would be positive

as converting the site to its natural topography would eliminate any potential for soil erosion related to track use.

e. Hazardous Materials

Implementation of the No Action alternative would not affect the risk of exposure to hazardous materials as no hazardous materials are found in the MX track footprint. There is potential for the heavy equipment used to decommission the track to spill petroleum products during operation and refueling. In order to prevent contamination of on site soils, the mitigation measure identified for the proposed action would also be implemented for the decommissioning work. Long-term impacts of eliminating the track would be positive as converting the site to its natural topography would eliminate any potential for petroleum product spills.

f. Hydrology and Water Quality

Implementation of the No Action alternative would have similar short-term impacts on water quality as the Proposed Action since the decommissioning work would involve grading to remove the existing track material and to re-contour the site to its natural topography. Some or all of the mitigation measures described for the proposed action would apply under the No Action alternative. Since the No Action alternative would result in the decommissioning of the motocross track, there would be a positive long-term effect on water quality as converting the site to its natural topography would eliminate any potential for erosion and siltation which could degrade the water quality of the Middle Fork American River. The ongoing mitigation required to minimize soil erosion and siltation would not be required under this alternative.

g. Land Use

Under the No Action alternative, the motocross track would not be available for OHV riders. Since the MX track drew three quarters of the users at Mammoth Bar in 2005, (representing nearly 15,000 user days per year), this loss in recreational opportunity is considered a significant negative effect on OHV recreational land use.

Decommissioning the track would have a positive effect on non-OHV activities such as hiking, wildlife viewing, picnicking, and sunbathing by providing a more conducive environment for these activities.

h. Scenic Resources

Converting the project site to its natural topography would eliminate the existing interruption in visual continuity created by the track. Revegetation of the site with native plant species will further restore the area to its natural ecological processes and will likely increase local wildlife populations. Since the No Action alternative would result in the decommissioning of the motocross track, there would be a positive effect on scenic resources with the return of the area to its natural landscape.

i. Noise

Implementation of the No Action alternative would reduce but not eliminate the existing noise environment at the site. Since the No Action alternative would result in the decommissioning of the motocross track, the noise associated with ongoing operation of the track would be eliminated; however, since the Mammoth Bar OHV Area would remain open to other OHV use during OHV operating hours, the noise from OHV use would not be completely eliminated. Overall, the environmental effect for noise from implementation of the no action alternative would be positive.

j. Environmental Justice

No disproportionately high or adverse environmental or human health affects on minority or low-income communities have been identified for the No Action alternative at the Mammoth Bar OHV Area.

k. Transportation and Traffic

The No Action alternative would not result in any changes or alterations to the existing highway and road networks in the Mammoth Bar OHV Area. Emergency access to project facilities would be via the existing network of paved and unpaved roads and OHV trails which would continue to be maintained appropriately. Thus no impacts on emergency access routes would be affected by the project. In addition, no existing parking areas would be affected.

l. Recreation

There is a potential to significantly impact the overall recreation use of Mammoth Bar through implementation of the No Action alternative. Under the No Action alternative, OHV use of Mammoth Bar motocross track would be eliminated. The 15,000 users/year of the MX track would have to find motocross track opportunities elsewhere, possibly at Prairie City State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) in Rancho Cordova. Implementation of the No Action alternative would require further consideration in an Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report. This issue will be analyzed in depth in the ASRA GP/IRMP EIS/EIR, which is currently being developed.

m. Indian Trust Assets

There are no Indian trust assets in ASRA and therefore there is no impact to ITA from the No Action alternative. The nearest Indian trust assets are located at the Old Auburn Rancheria, about 5 ½ miles southwest of Mammoth Bar, in NW1/4, SE1/4 Section 21, T12N, R8E.

n. Cumulative Impacts

The loss of a high quality OHV motocross track at ASRA would have a significant negative cumulative impact as there are very few motocross tracks on public lands. The nearest track is located at the Prairie City SVRA in Rancho Cordova. Loss of the Mammoth Bar track could increase OHV use at Prairie City and possibly degrade the quality of use that exists there now. Implementation of the no action alternative would require OHV users in the Auburn area to travel farther distances to other sites. In addition, loss of the track may compel users to create new tracks or trails on other off-site public lands which could cumulatively degrade the environment of these off-site lands.

The No Action alternative would return the OHV area to its natural state. To the extent that OHV use at Mammoth Bar OHV Area decreases as a result of the decommissioning of the track, there could be positive cumulative impacts on the environment including reduced noise and improved air quality during designated OHV use days.

IV. Draft Finding of No Significant Impact

United Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Region

Central California Area Office
Folsom, California

Draft Finding of No Significant Impact

Mammoth Bar OHV Area
Motocross Track Repair

Draft Initial Study/Environmental Assessment

FONSI # 2007-1

Recommended: _____ _____
Laura M. Caballero — Date
Natural Resources Specialist

Concur: _____ _____
Robert L. Schroeder — Date
Chief, Resource Management Division

Approved: _____ _____
Michael R. Finnegan — Date
Area Manager,
Central California Area Office

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Central California Area Office,
Folsom, California

Approval by United States for

MAMMOTH BAR OHV AREA
MOTOCROSS TRACK REPAIR
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Draft Finding of No Significant Impact

Lead Agency:
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Central California Area Office
Folsom, California

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Mammoth Bar OHV Area Motocross Track Repair has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, and the Council on Environmental Quality's Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508). The Central California Area Office of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has found that the Proposed Action would not significantly affect the quality of the environment; therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Proposed Action is to implement a remediation plan for the motocross track that would involve minor grading to repair portions of the storm damaged track. The repaired track would be 700 long, would vary between 12 feet and 25 feet wide, and would be no closer than 80 to 100 feet from the ordinary high water mark of the River. It would be contained within the same footprint as the existing motocross track, roughly 3.5 acres, and for the most part existing turns, curves and jumps would be used. The prior 800-foot service road on the west side of the track would be rebuilt by grading existing materials. The realigned service road would be similar in appearance to the former road with no imported materials used. A drainage swale would be incorporated into the project. Willows and forbs that would be disturbed during track repair would be transplanted at the down-stream end of the drainage swale in order to improve the performance of the drainage system and maximize the vegetative buffer. The track repair would take about 7-10 days to complete and would employ a crew of 2-4 persons using a combination of a front loader, small bulldozer, and water truck for dust control.

Under the No Action alternative the MX track would not be repaired and would not be reopened; however, to prevent unauthorized use of the damaged track by OHV users and possible injury to trespass riders, the damaged track would need to be decommissioned. This decommissioning would consist of removing all of the non-natural features that are currently present on the MX track such as irrigation pipes, sprinkler heads, and the water pump. The materials that comprise the remains of the track (i.e. remaining built up track banks, and jump mounds) would be re-contoured to a condition consistent with the original topography of the gravel bar.

FINDINGS

An Environmental Assessment (EA), distributed for public review in March of 2007, has been prepared to disclose potential environmental impacts pursuant to NEPA. The following discussion identifies why any effects of the Proposed Action are not considered significant.

1. The Proposed Action will have no significant impacts to air quality because the actions will occur in a remote area of Placer County and dust production during the repair work will be controlled by watering as needed during the 7-10 days the repair work is being completed.

2. Reclamation has determined that there will be no effect on biological resources. The location of the Proposed Action has no known occurrences of special status species.

3. Reclamation has determined that there will be no significant effect on Valley elderberry longhorn beetle (VELB) as Reclamation and CDPR have conducted surveys in 2001, 2003, and 2005 of the Proposed Action location that found no sign of VELB or VELB exit holes. Additionally, all construction activities and OHV activities will be at least 100 feet from the drip line of any elderberry shrubs at the MX motocross location.

4. The Proposed Action will have no significant effect on cultural and historic resource because all earth disturbing activities will be restricted to the footprint of original MX track, which has been highly disturbed during its 30 years of operation. Section 106 State Historic Preservation Office consultation and concurrence will be obtained prior to project construction.

5. Under the Proposed Action and the No Action alternative, there will be no significant impact to geology and soils because ground disturbing activities will only occur during dry periods, turbidity/siltation minimization measures will be used (i.e. silt fencing, coir logs, straw bale dikes, or other siltation barriers), and vegetation removal shall be limited to that required to make the track repairs.

6. Under the Proposed Action and No Action alternative, there will be no significant impact from hazardous materials. A toxics inventory survey of the proposed action area was completed in 2005 which identified no hazardous materials in the area; therefore, the repair work would not expose hazardous materials to the public. The potential for fuel spills by the earth moving equipment (dozer) would be minimized through the designation of a refueling station on site and implementation of spill prevention measures.

7. The Proposed Action will have a positive impact on OHV recreation which will result in a significant positive impact to recreation overall. The MX track has not been open since the December 2005/January 2006 floods. The partial replacement of the MX track under the Proposed Action will fulfill a significant OHV recreation demand in this geographic area. The OHV track will accommodate existing recreation needs for OHV use and is consistent with DPR OHV program guidelines.

8. The Proposed Action and the No Action alternative will have no significant effect on hydrology and water quality because ground disturbing activities will only occur during dry periods, turbidity/siltation minimization measures will be used (i.e. silt fencing, coir logs, straw bale dikes, or other siltation barriers), and vegetation removal shall be limited to that required to make the track repairs.

9. The Proposed Action would have no impact on land use and planning as the proposed action would fully comply with the conditions put forward in the settlement agreement between Sierra Club, Friends of the River, Environmental Law Foundation, and CDPR. These conditions include no expansion of OHV uses at Mammoth Bar and a period of operation of Sundays, Mondays, and Thursdays and, for the period of October 1 through March 31, also on Fridays. In addition, decisions regarding long-term land use and planning for Mammoth Bar will be fully analyzed in the upcoming GP/IRMP EIR/EIS.

10. The Proposed Action will not significantly impact scenic resources because the repaired MX Track will be smaller in size than the pre-flood track configuration.

11. The Proposed Action will not significantly impact the noise at the proposed site because the areas are already subjected to noise related to OHV activities and short term construction noise would be added to this noisy environment for only 7-10 days. The MX track is a single-use recreation facility designated only for OHV activities. This single-use is compatible with the historical and existing use of the area.

12. The Proposed Action would increase the quality and availability of OHV recreation at the site which is currently operated as an OHV recreation area.

13. Road improvements under the Proposed Action will have a positive impact on transportation and traffic by improving emergency vehicle access.

14. Under the Proposed Action or the No Action alternative there are no effects to environmental justice. No disproportionately high or adverse environmental or human health affects on minority or low-income communities have been identified for either the proposed alternative or the No Action alternative at the Mammoth Bar OHV Area.

15. Under the Proposed Action or the No Action alternative, there are no effects to Indian Trust Assets. There are no Indian trust assets in the ASRA and the nearest Indian trust assets are located at the Old Auburn Rancheria, about 5 ½ miles southwest of Mammoth Bar, in NW1/4, SE1/4 Section 21, T12N, R8E.

16. There will be no significant cumulative impacts from the Proposed Action since this project does not exceed the original MX track footprint. The MX track will be a partial reconstruction of the original track.

CONCLUSIONS

Reclamation has fully evaluated the information and analysis contained in the EA for the Mammoth Bar motocross track repair and use as summarized above. On the basis of these considerations, Reclamation has determined that the EA adequately and accurately addresses the environmental issues and impacts of the Proposed Action and finds that the Proposed Action is not a major federal action that will significantly impact the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an EIS is not required and will not be prepared for this project, based on the fact that there will be no long-term adverse impacts on the human environment resulting from the Mammoth Bar motocross track repair and use.